

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed 23 December 2003, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Claims 32, 33 and 49-57 were pending. Claims 32 and 33 were rejected and claims 49-57 were objected to. By this amendment, claim 52 has been amended and claims 32, 33 and 54 have been cancelled. The pending claims are now claims 49-53 and 55-57. Support may be found in the specification and claims as originally filed. No statutory new matter has been added. Entry of the amendment and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 54 and 57 under 37 CFR 1.75 as being substantial duplicates of claims 49 and 33, respectively.

Applicants have canceled claims 54 and 33. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

The Examiner objected to claim 52 based on an informality.

Applicants respectfully submit that the changes as suggested by the Examiner are unnecessary. However, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's help and have amended claim 52 as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claim 52 be withdrawn. Since the objection to claim 52 and the recommended amendment only relate to formalities, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 52 does not substantively change the scope and meaning of the claim from that previously presented.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 32 and 33 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Cusic, U.S. Patent No. 2,687,414, ('414 patent).

Applicants have canceled claims 32 and 33 in order to further prosecution, but reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 32 and 33 in a continuing application. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) should properly be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner noted that claims 49-51 and 52-57 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have cancelled claims 32, 33 and 54, and amended the claims as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as pending, claims 49-53 and 55-57, are allowable and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Request for Interview

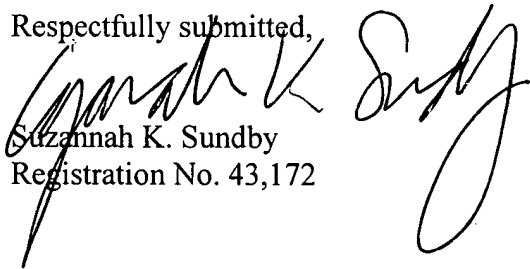
Applicants respectfully request either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), and any fees required therefore are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. **210-380**, referencing Attorney Docket No. **034047.008US (01-06)**.

Respectfully submitted,


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